

STATE BUDGETS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, recent headlines have reinforced a warning that Republicans and economic experts have been articulating literally for months: The massive spending the Democrats insisted upon at the outset of the Biden administration was not in step with actual needs.

Yesterday, I talked about some of the ways the multitrillion-dollar spending spree rammed through in March has actually delayed our reopening and our recovery: about the disappointing fall-off in hiring, despite a historic number of open jobs, after the Democrats renewed a Federal program that pays people extra not to work. Well, here is another misplaced priority from that spending spree: our Democratic friends' insistence on stuffing another wheelbarrow of cash into the accounts of State and local governments that were already rebounding from the crisis.

Back in February, as the Democrats insisted States were in dire need of another huge bailout, 29 of the 50 States were actually closing a 12-month chapter in which their revenues met or exceeded the year before. Twenty-nine of the fifty States were actually closing a 12-month chapter in which their revenues met or exceeded the year before the pandemic.

The faster-than-expected economic recovery, combined with the five bipartisan bills Congress passed in 2020, left a lot of cities and States in even better shape in exiting the pandemic than they were heading into it. Rising tax revenues had put these States in a position not only to weather pandemic-related downturns but to fill in pre-existing budgetary potholes that actually had nothing to do with COVID hardships.

Of course, that didn't stop the Democrats from cramming nearly another \$200 billion in State bailouts into the American Rescue Plan. Impressively, California got its hands on \$26 billion of the \$200 billion. By the way, the State of California now claims it already has a budget surplus three times that size—three times that size of a budget surplus—and we are sending them another \$26 billion.

They are having to brainstorm new ideas to spend the unneeded avalanche of cash. I understand the State's Governor has come up with one idea he likes. He is planning to cut a timely round of State-level stimulus checks to include people who are in the country illegally—just in time for his recall election later this year. Is that the kind of urgent priority the Democrats had in mind when they used COVID to push through what they called the "most progressive" legislation in history?

Experts warned it was poorly targeted, and Republicans said American families deserved better, but the big catalog of political payouts was pushed right through. Let's remember exactly how this played out before we are doomed to repeat it again.

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, yesterday, the Senate took a step toward considering wide-ranging legislation that would touch on multiple parts of the U.S. economy in the name of increasing innovation and competitiveness.

A secure, productive, and innovative America that can outcompete China is something that all 100 Senators want. Of course, in a place like the Senate, you are guaranteed to find a wide variety of different ideas about the best ways to encourage that. A number of our colleagues have assembled a proposal that touches on a long list of subjects—everything from funding universities, to regional economic development, to Indo-Pacific geopolitics, to artificial intelligence, to cyber security, and beyond. Legislation this broad needs a thorough, robust, and bipartisan floor process, including a healthy series of amendment votes.

As one of my Republican colleagues—the ranking member on the Commerce Committee—explained, as he supported moving the legislation out of committee, the current draft is "not ready for prime time" yet and deserves a robust process here on the floor.

I understand this bill has come to the floor with a bipartisan understanding and the Democratic leader's assurances that there won't be an effort to close debate on amendments prematurely. So I look forward to the Senate's considering these important issues, and I hope all of this interest in our competition with China will lead our Democratic friends to rethink President Biden's intention to cut our defense spending after inflation. The single best thing we can do to stay competitive with China is to give our Armed Forces the resources they need to stay competitive with China.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, sometime soon, we also expect to vote on a Democratic resolution to overturn a rule put in place by the previous administration. Under Republican leadership, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission—an aggressive Washington regulator of the American job market—issued modified marching orders that increased transparency and decreased the odds of expensive lawsuits.

Several years back, one investigation found the EEOC had become very aggressive and was perpetrating a kind of legal harassment on job creators, often leaving American taxpayers on the hook for court cases which the Commission had actually lost. Taxpayers were paying to sue job creators and lose in court, so the Republicans updated their guidance. It was the first substantial update of the way the EEOC handles disputes and concilia-

tion since 1977. It said that the employer in question deserves a written summary of the facts behind a complaint, a written explanation of the legal justification, a few other details, and 14 days to respond. Sounds pretty reasonable. This helps ensure the Commission is making a good-faith effort to see if the dispute can be settled outside of court before beginning a costly, adversarial process.

Apparently, even these modest steps were too much for my friends on the Democratic side. They want to roll back this progress. A number of groups have asked them not to do this, from small business owners, to builders and contractors, to restaurant owners, to retailers, and beyond. These are the same employers who are already struggling to climb back out of this pandemic and rehire workers. They don't need any more Washington headwinds in their faces, and taxpayers don't need more of their dollars being funneled back toward trial lawyers. So I would urge Senators to vote against this resolution so the current, improved rule can actually be left in place.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT—MOTION
TO PROCEED—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1260, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 58, S. 1260, a bill to establish a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation in the National Science Foundation, to establish a regional technology hub program, to require a strategy and report on economic security, science, research, innovation, manufacturing, and job creation, to establish a critical supply chain resiliency program, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS APRIL JOBS
REPORT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Ronald Reagan once said that the nine most terrifying words in the English language are "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help."

He was partially joking, of course, but what he was getting at is that government is not always the solution, and the government can sometimes do more harm than good, and we are definitely seeing some evidence of that right now.

On May 7, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the April jobs report. With businesses desperate to hire and vaccinations increasing daily, the report was expected to be big, with a good chance that a million or more workers would be hired.

But that is not what happened. Just 266,000 workers were hired, despite the fact that there were 8.1 million job openings as of the end of March, and the unemployment rate ticked up.

That is right. Despite the fact that businesses are desperate to hire workers, the unemployment rate actually increased, and it turns out that we don't have to look far for one of the reasons—Democrats' massive, partisan spending bill, which, among others things, extended the expanded unemployment benefits to September of this year, to the point where many workers are making more staying home than they would be going back to work.

Increasing unemployment benefits was the right thing to do early in the pandemic. Businesses were closed, workers were being forced to stay home, and the landscape was bleak. But even last year it became clear that our economy was starting to rebound.

That didn't mean it was time to eliminate all government help, but it did mean that we needed to calibrate the help to actual need.

But Democrats consistently rejected that line of thinking, and despite the fact that we had passed our fifth bipartisan COVID relief bill in December—bringing the total amount of COVID funding the Federal Government had provided to \$4 trillion—weeks later, Democrats announced that we needed another massive COVID relief bill.

Republicans tried to suggest that maybe we should keep it carefully targeted to meet remaining needs without wasting taxpayer dollars or running the risk of overstimulating the economy and driving up inflation, but Democrats were having none of that. This was urgently needed funding, we were told. America needed a massive rescue plan to save us from the virus, and Democrats were going to make it happen.

Well, as it turns out, that massive rescue package was too massive. Democrats insisted on extending increased unemployment benefits to September of this year, and now we are seeing the result.

Reports suggest that many people are declining to return to work because they can make more money staying home and drawing unemployment benefits. That is right. Jobs are available—the number of job openings is very high—but thanks to Democrats' long-term extension of increased unemployment benefits, some workers are staying on the sidelines.

It is not surprising. If individuals can make as much or more sitting at home instead of working, it is not very shocking that many would choose not to work.

The long-term increase in unemployment benefits is not, of course, the only factor keeping people from returning to the workforce, but it is clear that it is one substantial reason why businesses are struggling to find workers.

In the wake of April's dismal jobs report, Democrats, of course, were quick to discredit or downplay any association between increased unemployment benefits and the reluctance of some workers to come off the sidelines.

The President's Treasury Secretary suggested that a significant reason for not returning to work was the fact that schools have not fully reopened. Well, that is definitely another factor, and it is a problem Democrats could have addressed with their March COVID legislation.

Democrats directed tens of billions of additional dollars to schools in their legislation, most of which will be used long after the pandemic is over.

Republicans repeatedly urged Democrats to tie this funding to school reopening, but the teachers unions were not too interested in returning to school, and Democrats have made it very clear that unions' wish is Democrats' command.

And so Democrats gave schools billions of additional dollars to respond to COVID, without actually requiring schools to follow the science and reopen.

And so, yes, many parents are struggling with returning to work because their kids are still not fully back to in-person learning, and it is too bad that Democrats were more committed to satisfying the teachers unions than getting kids back to the classroom.

Before Democrats passed their COVID bill, there were concerns that the size of it could end up overstimulating the economy and thus driving up inflation. Even some liberal economists sounded the alarm over the size of Democrats' coronavirus legislation. But, again, Democrats were not about to listen to any calls to reduce the size of their massive spending bill.

And while the full results of Democrats' spending spree have yet to be seen, there are already signs that inflation may be becoming a problem.

Consumers are seeing increases—in some cases, steep increases—in the price of everything from groceries to used cars, to trucks.

There is no question that government had a significant role to play in responding to the COVID crisis. That is why a Republican-led Senate passed five—five—COVID relief bills, totaling \$4 trillion, and why we supported everything from increased unemployment benefits to forgivable loans to help small businesses weather the virus.

But as the crisis wanes, so should the role of government. American workers

are no longer being forced to stay home while businesses close their doors. Our economy is back up and running, and businesses are desperate for workers.

We should be doing everything that we can to get Americans back to work, and Democrats' \$1.9 trillion boondoggle isn't helping us with that goal.

A Democratic operative famously said: "Never let a serious crisis go to waste." And as our economy has recovered, a lot of Democrats have seemed very unwilling to let go of the pandemic. I don't know if that is because Democrats want to take credit for getting our Nation out of this, even though all the essential groundwork for our massive vaccination campaign and our economic recovery was laid in the previous administration or if it is because Democrats think that the COVID crisis will provide them with the cover they need to permanently increase government spending and government intervention on a massive scale. But whatever their motivation, the fact is that Democrats need to realize that it is time—it is time to get government out of the way of the recovery, and that should start with increasing, not decreasing, incentives for Americans to get back to work.

As we are seeing right now, sometimes throwing government money at a situation can do more harm than good.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ISRAEL

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, over the weekend, Israeli fighter jets demolished an office building in Gaza that housed the members of Hamas, the terrorist organization dedicated to wiping Israel and its people off the map, and they are actively pursuing that mission as we speak by firing thousands of rockets and missiles indiscriminately into Israeli cities.

To minimize civilian casualties, the Israeli Defense Forces gave persons in the building 1 hour advance notice the building was coming down. Everyone evacuated safely, including, one sadly assumes, Hamas fighters. When the airstrike came, there were no reported civilian casualties.

Certain activists in the press seem to meet every Israeli airstrike against terrorists with outrage, but this one elicited even more self-righteous indignation than usual. It quickly came to light that the Associated Press and Al Jazeera had news bureaus in that very building. The AP had lost prime real estate in the strike—real estate with a rooftop terrace. Some even lost their cameras.

The AP's top newsman said he was "shocked and horrified" by an airstrike that caused no casualties. He also disclaimed any knowledge of Hamas's presence in the building, despite "actively check[ing]." Many other journalists and their advocacy organizations also mounted up on their moral high horses against Israel.

But the AP story just didn't add up. So I asked a few basic questions in a speech right here yesterday afternoon; namely, why was the Associated Press sharing a building with Hamas in the first place? Did it knowingly allow its journalists to be used as human shields by a U.S.-designated terrorist organization? Did the AP pull its punches and decline to report for years on Hamas's misdeeds?

One would think that these are simple and reasonable questions, but I directed them to a media organization. So the usual suspects circled the wagons, expressing more outrage at my audacity to question AP's leadership than they do at Hamas for trying to kill Jews by the thousands.

Keith Olbermann called me an "anti-Constitution, anti-Free Press, racist fascist." One Slate reporter wrote that I was making "deranged insinuations" and going to "bat against civilians in a war-zone," even though no civilians had been harmed in this airstrike.

The constant refrain of their criticism was that I was attacking the brave reporters of the Associated Press's Gaza bureau. My claims were baseless, reckless, "without evidence," they claimed. But, in fact, there is plenty of evidence that some media outlet station in Gaza allowed themselves to be used as pawns by Hamas.

According to an article from the Atlantic magazine in 2014, written by none other than, yes, a former Associated Press reporter, the AP had abundant reason to suspect Hamas's presence years before the IDF informed them by telephone last weekend. According to the article, Hamas fighters burst into the AP's Gaza bureau during a previous conflict and threatened the staff. Hamas also launched missiles right outside the AP's office. In each case, somehow the intrepid reporters of the Associated Press's Gaza bureau didn't even report on these incidents.

The AP instead turned a blind eye to terrorism and embraced a culture of silence on behalf of murderers who actively endangered its own reporters and staff. What is equally scandalous is that the AP continued to locate their offices in a building they knew was dangerous. The AP had been in that building for 15 years. Hamas fighters had threatened AP staff and its offices and launched missiles right outside on the street. In 15 years did no one ever say: Gosh, I wonder why Hamas keeps running around our office building? Did no one in AP's leadership think: You know, maybe we should move our people to a safer building in a better neighborhood?

Under the circumstances, I am not sure what is worse, that the AP knew

they shared their building with Hamas or that they didn't know.

Instead of uncovering the truth, the AP concealed it. Then, when the IDF carried out its fully justified and wholly appropriate airstrike, the AP condemned Israel in one final parting gift to their neighbors from Hamas.

Now, one would think that this episode might result in some soul-searching. The AP's leadership might see it as a humbling moment, instead of an opportunity to self-aggrandize and play the victim. But the AP's willingness to double down on their Hamas apologetics raises, yet again, some more uncomfortable questions. Would the AP allow its reporters to share a building with al-Qaida? What about ISIS? Because there are little differences between these U.S.-designated terrorist organizations and Hamas.

Some prestigious news outlets have fallen pretty far from the heights they once occupied. Being a reporter, and, certainly, a war correspondent, can be honorable work. Great men and women, including Winston Churchill, have dedicated themselves to the profession. Correspondents have gone to the frontlines and reported on some of the deadliest conflicts in human history with courage, commitment to truth, and patriotism.

During the Second World War, for example, a great American named Ernie Pyle marched alongside GIs in North Africa, Italy, Normandy, and the Pacific, reporting right up until the moment he was killed by Japanese machine-gun fire. He did some of his very best work for none other than the Associated Press.

Ernie Pyle was the farthest thing from an old press hack. He described the fighting up close and advocated for better pay and conditions for the troops. He could be critical of the services when they were wrong, but he never forgot whose side he was on, and he never gave up his commitment to telling the stories of normal people and the hard-working troops on the front-line.

Before America's entrance into the war, Pyle reported from the streets of London during the Blitz, recounting the terrifying scenes for readers back home in the States. He told the story of a resolute people under siege and forced into bombshell shelters by an indiscriminate and evil attacker—a people unbent and unbroken by terror, dedicated to victory, no matter the adversity.

We often learn from reporting like that, but you may not read it these days in the Associated Press.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on May 7, we learned of a cyber attack on the Colonial Pipeline. This resulted in gas shortages and lines across the east coast. You see it on television every day.

During a news conference, Energy Secretary Granholm said: "Pipelines are the best way to transport fuel." This is certainly a fact. Pipelines are much safer than transporting oil by rail or truck. Iowa has over 40,000 miles of pipeline which go largely unnoticed but play a large role in providing our Nation's transportation fuel.

It is not lost on millions of Americans that this statement from the Energy Secretary comes from the same administration that, on day one, January 20, shut down the Keystone Pipeline. On day one, January 20, this administration cut 10,000 jobs. Remember, they ran on a platform of creating jobs. This has already resulted in rising gas prices like we are seeing across the country. In fact, gas prices will soon be more expensive than at any time since the Obama administration.

This cyber attack on Colonial showed America just how critical pipeline infrastructure is for transportation and how that affects national security. For an administration that is stressing infrastructure, maybe they should take a second look at the decision on January 20 to shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline. I shudder to think that if the Colonial Pipeline were attempting to get a permit today, this administration might not even allow the construction.

The United States should be encouraging private infrastructure investment, not getting in the way of progress that investment would bring. As long as our country is still relying on oil to fill our gas tanks, we need to have the infrastructure and security in place so that what happened last week never happens again.

When there is a shortage of oil, then biofuels can be an easy substitute that can be subbed in, but again, government redtape is getting in the way. The Environmental Protection Agency should quickly finalize a rule to broaden the availability of existing infrastructure for use with E15 ethanol and related labeling requirements. This would allow more gas stations to use their current tanks for E15.

We need a balanced approach, and biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel can help achieve greenhouse gas reductions and strengthen our national security, keeping gas prices in check and helping agriculture of America at the same time.

PRESIDENTIAL POWER

Mr. President, on another matter, I have heard from a large number of Iowans convinced that our Republic is effectively lost with the election of President Biden. This seems to be like the Flight 93 election theory in the 2016 election, where some conservatives felt that, if Clinton won, the country would

be lost for good. So, like the Flight 93 passengers who rushed the cockpit in a last-ditch attempt to avert a catastrophic outcome that probably would have hit this Capitol Building, they argued that any alternative to Clinton was justified.

The left, then, felt the same way after Trump won. When President Trump was elected, I received an outpouring of messages expressing a truly startling degree of fear and anguish. It is as if we had just elected an evil King or dictator.

Understanding human nature, the Framers of our Constitution set up a system of separation of powers, knowing it was not safe to just trust the character of individual public officials. The President is supposed to, as the Constitution said, “see that the laws be faithfully executed,” not to be some all-powerful, elected King.

The American Presidency shouldn’t be and was never supposed to be so important or so powerful that Americans ought to feel that their entire future is at stake every 4 years. Yet many Americans do feel that way, and it isn’t all just a misunderstanding.

Presidential power has grown beyond its proper bounds intended by the Constitution. Why is that? That “Why is it?” lies right here with the Congress of the United States because, over time, Congress has delegated too much authority piece by piece, in countless bills, and failed to this very day to do much to take back that authority.

During the Trump administration, I worked to reclaim some delegated powers over tariffs, emergency declarations, and regulations but lacked sufficient bipartisan support to get the job done. I have no illusions that a Democratic Congress will limit President Biden’s powers, but perhaps we could agree to reclaim powers for Congress with some future effective date.

So much focus on one person, whether it is a Republican or a Democrat, and one election every 4 years, like we worried about 2016 or people are still worrying about 2020—that is not a healthy environment for a democracy. Restoring the proper balance between the Presidency and the Congress can help restore some balance to our fiscal discourse.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

S. 1260

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, Winston Churchill is often credited with the apocryphal quote that “we sleep soundly in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm.”

This is still true, but the 21st century has gotten more complicated. We live

in an era of hybrid wars. There are fewer D-days on enemy beaches and more zero-day exploits in enemy servers.

Americans sleep soundly at night because, in addition to these rough men at the ready, brilliant men and women work around the clock to develop national security technology that defends our interests and undermines our enemies. DARPA—the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency—is on the frontlines of that work. They are racing against our adversaries.

Our technology struggle against the Chinese Communist Party is the defining national security challenge of our time. Chairman Xi and his techno-authoritarian regime are fundamentally opposed to not just American values but American interests all around the globe.

Our citizens watching this Chamber on most days might think that most of their political leaders are content to ignore this reality, but I assure my colleagues in this Chamber that the CCP is not asleep at the switch.

Beijing is aggressively investing in machine learning and artificial intelligence and in quantum computing. They are hacking and stealing America’s research and America’s intellectual property. The Chinese Communist Party is on a mission, and they make no attempt to hide it. They want to become the world’s preeminent superpower, and they think that by claiming first-mover advantage in the cyber domain, they can achieve this. We can’t let that happen.

My amendment to today’s legislation is simple: It doubles DARPA’s budget, \$3.5 billion to \$7 billion a year for each of the next 5 years. The work of the National Science Foundation is important as well, and I support that work. I support that research. But the NSF’s research is broad. DARPA’s research is directly applied to our most critical national security challenges.

Cutting-edge, classified tech development is in DARPA’s DNA. When we talk about identifying and disrupting the CCP’s AI-enabled cyber and information campaigns, we want DARPA to be leading that work. When we talk about developing new technological tools to push back on the CCP’s hybrid warfare, we want DARPA to be leading that work.

If we want American democracy to outlast Chinese techno-authoritarianism, we can make this investment. Doubling DARPA’s budget is a cost-effective investment that bolsters that work, and it bolsters the work of the Endless Frontier legislation we are debating this week, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The Senator from Florida.

CHINA

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, a year ago Saturday, the previous administration, the Trump administration, launched something called Operation Warp

Speed. At that time, it was a \$10 billion program by the government, and it was designed to incentivize pharmaceutical companies to invest in developing, researching, and producing effective treatments and a vaccine for a disease that was ravaging and continues to ravage the world today.

Less than 4 months later, a new antibody treatment was beginning to save American lives and improving the outcomes of patients with COVID-19 here in America. And less than 7 months after that Operation Warp Speed program began, Americans began receiving the first dose of two different and highly effective vaccines.

Why did the government have to step in? Why did the government have to provide the money? Wouldn’t the market have solved this? There was certainly a demand. There was certainly a need for it. In fact, I would argue that people probably would have paid whatever it took to get their hands on a vaccine and on new treatments given the level of desperation that existed in May of last year here and around the world.

Yes, the market would have eventually developed the antivirals, would have developed the antibody treatments, and would have developed the vaccine. The market would have eventually done it without the government stepping in, in this dramatic way. But it wouldn’t have done it in the timing that we needed it. We needed it right away. Our economy was shut down. Children were not going to school. Workers had no jobs. Small businesses were being wiped out. Hospitals were being overrun, and people were dying. We were facing a global crisis and a national emergency. It was a moment that required urgent attention and the fastest results possible. So for the common good of our country, our government partnered with the private sector to reach a targeted end, one that served the interest of our country and our people. In short, we pursued “industrial policy” and almost 1 year to the very day, it was announced that life in America is, slowly but steadily, returning to normal.

I first spoke about the need for a 21st century American industrial policy well over a year before the pandemic hit. Let me tell you that for much of my adult life, much of the time I even paid attention to policy, “industrial policy” was generally sort of a dirty phrase for me. Politically, I was raised capitalist orthodox. It is an economic faith grounded in the belief of less taxes and less government and more freedom.

I still believe in less taxes and less government and more freedom, and my faith in capitalism has only grown because, unlike socialism, the market always produces the most efficient outcome and, usually, generally, invariably, the result of that is prosperity and opportunity. The free market—capitalism—has eradicated more poverty than all the socialist programs in the world combined.

But the market is agnostic. It doesn't take into account the impact that an efficient outcome, a market outcome, would have on its people. Thus the market does not take into account its national interests. It is agnostic.

We in public policy cannot be agnostic. The job of those of us who serve in the American Government is to make decisions that are in the best interests of America and the people that we serve. I believe that, generally and invariably, that usually means supporting a vibrant system of free enterprise in which private businesses invest and innovate and produce, and government makes it easier for them to do that and gets out of the way.

But what do we do, what should we do, when the market reaches the most efficient outcome and the most efficient outcome is one that is bad for America, bad for Americans, or doesn't meet a crisis at hand fast enough? What is our role when we face such a crisis, when we must address one that has to be addressed faster than the market's ability to do it?

This is not a hypothetical question. It describes what we faced in May of last year, when Operation Warp Speed was announced, and it describes many of the important challenges we face today.

Over the last 20 years—maybe 25 years—the market sent American factories and jobs to other countries. This was the most efficient decision to make because workers in other countries cost less, and so it lowered labor costs and increased profits. It was the market's decision. It was the efficient decision, but it destroyed the jobs of Americans. It shattered families. It gutted once-vibrant communities.

Major American corporations headquartered here in the United States—multinationals—have allowed China to steal trade secrets and cheat on trade because, for them, gaining access to even a small sliver of the growing Chinese market of over a billion people led to profits. This, indeed, did create short-term profits and extravagant wealth for some, but in the process it began transforming America from a country that invents and makes things into one that increasingly just finances and buys them.

It is, indeed, more efficient to make the active ingredients in many of our medicines in China. It is cheaper to do it. So, today, we find ourselves depending on China to produce the active ingredients in everything from acetaminophen, which is generic for Tylenol, all the way to blood thinners and everything in between.

It was cheaper to buy rare-earth minerals from China—it still is—than to produce and mine our own. Today, we depend on them for almost 90 percent of these valuable metals that are needed not just for advanced electronics but for our own major weapons systems. We made the decision to allow Chinese companies free rein to own and to buy

and to make money in America, almost without restrictions, because we are capitalists.

They, on the other hand, restrict and ban our businesses from doing work in China because they are nationalists. None of this is an accident. China has a plan. It has a plan to overtake America as the world's leading economic, technological, geopolitical, diplomatic, and military power. I don't say this to you based on some supersecret intelligence document or an educated guess. They put it on paper. They have written this out for everyone to see in 2015. The Chinese Communist Party laid out a plan with a title called "Made in China 2025."

It basically is a plan to invest in and overtake us in 10 of the industries that will define the 21st century economy—biomedicine, advanced technology, air and space, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, telecommunications, 5G, rail systems, ship building. They intend to lead the world in all of these areas, and they are executing on a plan to carry that out, and we have been complacent and distracted.

So while China channels every element of their national power, every element that you can imagine—while they channel all of it—to dominate these key industries and to do it at our expense, we assume that our position in the world will continue on its own without having to do anything to maintain it.

While China is pursuing economic and technological dominance, we find ourselves here busy canceling people, demanding the use of the right pronoun to describe people, or claiming that requiring a photo ID to vote is the return of a Jim Crow era.

We have placed ourselves on the road of decline and humiliation, headed toward a world in which a totalitarian regime—one guilty right now, as we speak, of committing genocide against Uighur Muslims—becomes the leading power on the planet and relegating our country, America, into the status of a once great nation in decline.

We do not need to abandon capitalism and embrace socialism to take on this challenge. I believe socialism would only accelerate the damage our decisions are doing to our country. We need capitalism, but it must be a capitalism geared toward promoting the national interest and the common good, where the private market drives our economic decisions. And in those instances where the market outcome is bad for our country, in those instances in which the market's most efficient outcome is one that is bad for our people, for our national security, for our national interests, bad for America—in those instances—what we need is targeted industrial policy to further the common good and to protect our people, our country, and our future. We need an industrial policy targeted not to every industry or to the one who hires the right lobbyist. No, we need an industrial policy like Operation Warp

Speed, targeted to urgent national needs; policies like my Medical Manufacturing, Economic Development, and Sustainability Act, which would help bring back our ability to make medicines in this country again, including in places like Puerto Rico that need the economic growth and jobs; like the CHIPS Act we passed last year to make sure we never have to depend on China or any other country, for that matter, for semiconductors.

In 2019, well before the pandemic, I proposed modernizing the Small Business Administration and aligning its programs to the national interest, like my American Innovation and Manufacturing Act, which would incentivize private investment in small American manufacturers through the SBA.

And even as we make these sorts of targeted industrial policy decisions, we need to make sure that we are protecting them from being stolen from us. One of the changes we need to make in the China bill that is now before the Senate is we need to have stronger protections against the research that we are funding from being stolen.

First, more of this money should be invested through agencies like DARPA, as an example, which has very good safeguards in place.

Second, we should prohibit any entity from receiving the funds called for in this bill if they receive China-based financial or in-kind support, or if they otherwise failed to disclose foreign funding in the past 10 years.

Third, we should require certification that a potential recipient of the funding has sufficient protections in place to guard against IP theft and other threats from foreign governments before they were giving them the money. It would be something if we appropriate all this money for industrial policy, we invest it, and then we see it stolen.

Fourth, we should prohibit Federal employees and contractors from participating in any foreign government talent recruitment program, and we should require Federal contractors to disclose any commercial ties they might have to the Communist Party in China.

And, fifth, we should establish a system of outbound investment screening. Even if we are successful in preventing adversarial actors from acquiring Federal research dollars or intellectual property developed by it, there is nothing to stop nationless corporations from simply buying the IP and using it to develop capacities to benefit China and hurt our interests.

This is an important moment, I think, one that will define the remainder of the century. When the book about the 21st century is written, it will have a few chapters about a lot of different things. But that book is going to be about the relationship between China and the United States and what happened, and what happened is in very many ways being decided right now.

We must ensure that our public policies are aligned to the urgent challenges of our time. Our job here is to promote the common good and to defend the national interest. By and large, that is a free enterprise, capitalist economy that will produce the innovation, the investments, and all of the things necessary to make that possible.

Yet, in those instances in which a national need is urgent, in which the outcome that the market has delivered is harming our country and its long-term future, we have an obligation to act on the common good. We should not allow orthodoxy or policies that made a lot of sense in the 1980s—a very different world from today—to stand in the way of the sorts of targeted government-private partnerships needed: the kinds of partnerships that gave us a vaccine that is bringing us back to normal; the kind of partnership that will allow us to tackle the challenges we face now so that the 21st century will ultimately be an American century and so that our leadership in these key industries that will define the century is neither endangered nor lost.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, one of the topics of discussion right now here in Washington, DC—actually, there are many different topics of discussion, but one of those is infrastructure. Depending on who you ask, you are likely to get different answers on what exactly people mean when they say the word “infrastructure.”

When I and my constituents in Texas think about infrastructure, we think about our highways and bridges. Now, those are two of the big things that come to mind. We are home to the largest network of highways in the Nation, as well as the largest number of bridges, and these structures are supporting more and more Texans by the day. It is no secret that, in the last decade, Texas has grown by nearly 4 million people—roughly the population of our neighbor to the north, Oklahoma. If we want to get all 29 million Texans and our visitors and our crucial commercial cargo around the State safely and efficiently, we need a reliable network of transportation infrastructure, and there is a lot of room for improvement over the status quo.

Every year, the American Society of Civil Engineers evaluates America's infrastructure and issues a report card that lets us know how we are doing. Well, America is barely passing with a C-minus. Texas is faring only slightly better than the rest of the class with a C. There is no doubt about it—it is time for an investment in our infrastructure. Now more than ever, that investment must be made responsibly.

We just spent trillions of dollars to help the American people and our economy get through a pandemic, and our national debt is at its highest level

since World War II. I have told my friends back home that this is the domestic equivalent to a world war. We didn't ask in World War II: How much money can we spend? We needed to defeat our enemies, and we did. Then we needed to come together responsibly and figure out how to pay for it.

We don't need to quit spending altogether, but we surely must take a closer look at what is necessary and what is desirable and what is something we would like to have but that could be put off for another day. Think of the Goldilocks principle: not too hot, not too cold. In this case: not too small, not too big. We need to find the right size, and we need to agree on what that means.

The most recent highway and transit funding bill that became law was the FAST Act of 2015. That bill came in right around \$300 billion. Last Congress, before the pandemic hit, it looked like we were poised to pass a similar bill at roughly the same pricetag. I think we can all agree that, now, something of that size is probably too small. We need to invest in our infrastructure—repair our roads, our bridges, our airports, our levees, and other transportation infrastructure that is long overdue.

The pandemic has highlighted the need to expand that definition, though; for example, to strengthen broadband and internet access. For many Americans, the daily commutes to work or to school have been replaced by virtual classrooms and telework. Our 21st-century economy and society depend on internet connections, and we need to do more to improve access, especially in rural areas, where the big internet companies don't find it commercially advantageous to offer service.

Republicans and Democrats agree that, this time around, we need a larger investment in our Nation's infrastructure, but, frankly, the proposal from President Biden is far too big. The nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates it would cost an additional \$2.65 trillion—roughly nine times the recent highway bill that became law—and that is on top of the \$1.9 trillion that the Senate majority and the House and the President just passed into law purportedly for additional COVID-19 relief, although only about 10 percent of it actually addressed COVID-19. The point is, we have been spending a lot of money, and we can't keep spending money that we are borrowing from future generations.

Not surprisingly, only a fraction of the President's infrastructure bill is dedicated to roads and bridges—5 percent, in fact. The vast majority of the funding goes toward a long list of programs and policies that are unrelated to infrastructure—for example, caregiving for the elderly and disabled; community colleges; programs to improve diversity in STEM careers. All of those are important topics, but they are not infrastructure, and we

shouldn't be paying for them by borrowing money from future generations. We ought to figure out appropriate offsets and pay-fors like we used to do here before the pandemic hit. Our job is to find the right-sized bill that suits our needs without going overboard with unnecessary and unrelated spending.

Fortunately, Mrs. CAPITO, the Senator from West Virginia, is leading the way to find that Goldilocks just-right fit. She and a number of our colleagues have outlined to President Biden and our Democratic colleagues a framework to improve our Nation's infrastructure. The plan they have proposed comes in at \$568 billion—more than we have spent in the past but far less than the President's proposal.

When we talk about the need for bipartisan compromise, this is a great place to start. The Republican plan includes nearly \$300 billion for roads and bridges—2½ times the President's plan for roads and bridges. It also invests in airports, drinking and waste water, ports and waterways, broadband, and some of the most urgent infrastructure priorities in our country.

Last week, Senator CAPITO and five of our Republican colleagues met with Vice President HARRIS and President Biden to discuss a path forward. They, apparently, had a productive meeting, and the President seemed to be receptive to many of the ideas that were shared. I hope this is the starting point for a consensus package that addresses our infrastructure needs.

There is a question that almost nobody wants to talk about, but thanks to Senator RON WYDEN of Oregon and Senator MIKE CRAPO of Idaho, we actually had a virtual hearing on this this morning in the Senate Finance Committee to answer the taboo question that nobody really wants to talk about, which is, How do we pay for it? As I said, this was the subject of the Senate Finance Committee hearing this morning, and I am sure some of the ideas that were put forward will begin to start to take traction and, hopefully, lead us to a way to responsibly pay for this infrastructure bill.

In the past, funding for infrastructure bills has come from the highway trust fund, but for years, it has faced severe shortfalls. To a serious degree, my constituents in Texas have footed the bill for those shortfalls. We are one of the few States, for example, that receives less than it contributes to the highway trust fund. In other words, we are a donor State. For every dollar we put into the highway trust fund, we get 95 cents back. Well, that is not the same treatment every State is getting. In fact, we have a lower rate of return than every other State. If we want to have any long-term success in maintaining our roads and bridges, we have to bring this formula up to date, and it has to be equitable.

The smart spending, though, can't stop there. We need to repurpose the mountain of unused Federal funds from

the so-called COVID-19 relief bill. States are awash with cash that they, frankly, don't know how to spend. The massive \$1.9 trillion bill became law without the support of a single Republican because it was so extravagant and poorly targeted. Case in point: the blue State bailout. This legislation sent 350 billion additional dollars to State and local governments, many of which were not facing any budgetary shortfalls.

We have started to see a flurry of news stories in the past few weeks that have demonstrated exactly why we were opposed to this reckless spending. For example, California has reported a \$75 billion budget surplus—a massive amount of money. Governor Newsom says this will be used to pay down past State debts, send direct checks to Californians, and add to its rainy day fund. In addition to California, you have New York, Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota. Each of these States is expected to have more than a \$1 billion surplus—again, because of the massive shuffling of cash out of Washington, DC, into the States that was not targeted to COVID-19 relief.

This is exactly why we advocated against this tidal wave of funding for States that were not even operating in the red. Taxpayer dollars shouldn't be spent to erase the debts of mismanaged States or to add to their rainy day funds. They have the ability to raise revenue themselves, so it shouldn't be the responsibility of the Federal taxpayers to bail them out or to provide them with this huge cash cushion with their looking to try to find responsible ways to spend it.

Tens of billions of unused dollars from this legislation should be repurposed to help cover the costs of these investments without driving our national debt even higher. It is common sense, and I actually believe that there is a way to incentivize the States to use that additional cash for infrastructure purposes, whether it is through modifications and cost sharing between State and local governments. Many of those States are struggling to find a way, within the guidelines and guardrails that we have provided for COVID-19 relief, to spend it anyway, so why not spend it for infrastructure? Maybe there is a win-win there.

There are a number of ideas now on the table about how to pay for this infrastructure bill, but I hope we can all agree that the massive tax hike that President Biden is proposing is not the answer. This would constitute the largest set of tax hikes in more than half a century, and these increases would do serious damage to our economy just as we are coming out of a pandemic-induced recession.

At a time when our economy is already on fragile footing, the tax burden on Americans would be greater than that of our biggest trading partners and competitors, and this would have far-reaching consequences for our competitiveness and our economy as a whole. After all, we know these tax

hikes won't be reflected in lower earnings for CEOs. The brunt will be borne by consumers, who will pay higher prices, and by workers, who will earn lower wages, and let's not forget those whose jobs have disappeared entirely. We are already seeing some price hikes on some of our most used consumer products, covering everything from cereal, to diapers, to lumber, and to cars.

This is not the time to increase taxes and drive inflation across our economy, which is, actually, a tax increase on low- and middle-income people. We need to find responsible ways to fund an investment in our infrastructure without hurting our economy and the people we represent. Right now, it appears that bipartisan progress is being made toward that just-right-sized policy and for it to be paid for in a responsible way or, at least, that is my optimistic hope.

So I want to thank Senator CAPITO for her leadership on this effort and all those who have been working with our Democratic colleagues and the administration and encourage them to continue to work with folks on our side of the aisle so we can get this done on a timely basis.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer. (Ms. SINEMA).

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

TAXES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday marked the deadline for filing personal income taxes in America. I am sure many people spent the past weekend surrounded by 1099 forms and shoe boxes full of receipts, hoping to claim a well-deserved tax refund after a year of financial stress due to the pandemic.

That is another reason why the American Rescue Plan that Congress passed earlier this year was such a major accomplishment. It included, that plan, included the largest, single-year tax cut for middle- and low-income earners in the history of the Nation. Let me repeat that. This year's American Rescue Plan included the largest, single-year tax cut for middle- and low-income earners in America's history.

But for a privileged few, those tax cuts are pennies compared to the deductions they enjoy every year because of Republican tax proposals, proposals like the Trump tax plan that Republicans signed into law in 2017, just 4 years ago. Over the next few years, it is

estimated that more than 80 percent of the benefits from this Trump tax plan will go exclusively to the top 1 percent of American earners—the top 1 percent. It is nothing more than welfare for the wealthiest.

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of the Trump tax plan is the billions of taxpayer dollars it will give to the world's wealthiest individuals and corporations over the next decade. We are already feeling the devastating impact this corporate giveaway has had on America's economy.

Listen to this now, if you just turned in your taxes. Last year, 55 of the largest companies in America paid zero—zero dollars in Federal taxes despite making more than \$40 billion in profits. Forty billion dollars in profits; zero taxes. It is a glaring example of the imbalance in our tax system.

I don't think there is any rational explanation for having schoolteachers and janitors pay more in taxes than the largest corporations, but it seems the folks on the other side of the aisle disagree.

When Senator MCCONNELL met with President Biden last week, he said that raising taxes on corporations—the same corporations that paid zero last year in taxes—is a “red line” when it comes to funding the President's infrastructure package. That means Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader in the Senate, would rather cut taxes for the ultrawealthy than repair America's crumbling roads and bridges.

Did you see that picture in the news? Of the bridge? I think it was in Tennessee, on one of the interstates. It cracked so badly, they had to close it, close an interstate bridge. We remember just a few years ago in Minnesota, an interstate highway collapsed, taking American lives. It can happen and will continue to happen unless we do our part. That is not just bad policy; it is dangerous.

I guess this is the picture that I brought to show what was happening with this bridge in Tennessee. You can see the crack in the steel girders there and the reason they closed the bridge. God forbid some other bridge is in that same shape and we haven't discovered it or we won't discover it soon enough.

We need to put some money in our infrastructure. We count on it every day. People rely on the safety of these bridges and other facilities, and it is our job to make sure they are kept up.

That is not just bad policy, saying no tax increases for corporations if it means paying for infrastructure that way; it is dangerous.

Take a look at what happens when we fail to adequately invest in our infrastructure. That photo tells it all. A “structural crack” they called it. That was found in a bridge in Memphis, TN, last week. Tens of thousands of vehicles drive over that bridge every day. It connects commuters and commercial traffic between Arkansas and Tennessee. If not for a scrupulous engineer who caught the crack, local authorities